

**ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE  
AND  
PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**Special Meeting - Capital Budget Minutes**

A special joint meeting of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee and the Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on **May 25, 2004**, to discuss the matter of the Capital Budget.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Jay Schneiderman • Chairman/Parks & Cultural Affairs

Vice•Chair/Environment, Planning & Agriculture

Legislator Cameron Alden • Member/Parks & Cultural Affairs

Legislator Ricardo Montano • Member/Parks & Cultural Affairs

Legislator Peter O'Leary • Member/Parks & Cultural Affairs, Member/Environment, Planning & Agriculture

Legislator David Bishop • Member/Environment, Planning & Agriculture

Legislator Daniel Losquadro • Member/Environment, Planning & Agriculture

**Members Not Present:**

Legislator Michael Caracciolo•Chair/Environment, Planning & Agriculture

Legislator Angie Carpenter • Member/Parks & Cultural Affairs

Legislator Vivian Vilorio•Fisher • Member/Parks & Cultural Affairs

Legislator Jon Cooper • Member/Parks & Cultural Affairs

**Also in Attendance:**

Legislator William Lindsay, District #8

Mea Knapp, Counsel to the Legislature

Alexandra Sullivan, Chief Deputy Clerk/SC Legislature

Meaghan O'Reilly, Aide to Presiding Officer Caracappa

Linda Bay, Aide to Presiding Officer Caracappa

Charles Bender, Aide to Presiding Officer Caracappa

Jim Spero, Director/Budget Review Office

Kevin Duffy, Budget Review Office

Sean Clancy, Budget Review Office

Ben Zwirn, Assistant Deputy County Executive

Roger Podd, County Executive's Office

Bob Bortzfield, Director/County Executive's Budget Office

Thomas Isles, Director/Suffolk County Planning Department

Patricia Zielinsky, Director/Division of Real Estate/Planning

All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Diana Kraus • Court Stenographer

**(THE MEETING WAS CONVENED AT 9:53 AM)**

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Are we ready? Good morning, everyone. Thank you for coming. I'd like to call this Special Meeting to order of the Parks Committee and the Environment Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature to discuss the Capital Budget. If you all will rise and join us for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Bishop.

**(SALUTATION)**

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I'd like to start off by thanking Jim Spero and the entire office of Budget Review for a very detailed and very well put together report on the Capital Budget. I'm looking forward to your presentation as well as answering questions that the Legislators have. So, thank you very much. It's very helpful and informative.

I should start •• we have no yellow cards, but if any of the Commissioners want to come up at this point and address the legislative Committees, this would be the time. Okay. We have Tom Isles, Director of Planning.

I should say, just for the record, I wasn't expecting to be chairing. Legislator Caracciolo was to chair this meeting. He may be running late. I haven't heard from him. I'm expecting him. So, I'm filling in until he arrives. Mr. Isles.

**MR. ISLES:**

Good morning, members of the Committee, Mr. Schneiderman, Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity to •• just to comment very briefly on the proposed Capital Program the County Executive has submitted as it affects the Planning Department and the Division of Real Estate. Specifically today what I'd like to do is just briefly address the Budget Review Office's comments regarding the County's land acquisition programs. And begin by saying that overall we have no significant objection or note of their comments, but there are a couple of points that I'd just like to make to you today regarding the budget itself.

Number one, the amount available is, we believe, generally accurate in terms of the \$43.9 million that's indicated in the second paragraph of the review. That number is obviously a number that's influx in terms of as acquisitions go to contract, as accepted offers move to contract or fail as sometimes occurs. But we generally agree with that one. What it doesn't reflect, I think, this is noted but just for your clarification, is it doesn't reflect items that are pending in the pipeline such as those where planning steps have been issued. And they're still early on in the process whereby they have not yet gotten to the point of actually paying for the appraisal, which is what puts it actually on the list in negotiation.

So, just to highlight some of the parcels that many of you probably know that are out there, but here again they're not reflected in anything in the pending negotiation, one would be the Overton Preserve properties in the Town of Brookhaven, 400 acres that are authorized for planning steps, Amsterdam Beach in East Hampton, Maycroft in Northaven, Elgreen, which is a large recreation site in the Town of Huntington. I'm not going to do all of them either, believe me. Spring Meadow in Brookhaven, the Ludlow Farm on the south fork, a rather significant and expensive acquisition, but important. The Zay Farm in Brookhaven, the Loughlin Farm in Sayville, the Carman Farm in Riverhead, the Nassau Four•H Farm in Riverhead as well. So there are a number of properties there. Others also include the properties that are identified in the list, but do not yet have funding amounts associated with them; meaning that they are on the list of parcels that are being negotiated but they're •• we had not yet plugged in a number at that point. That would include the Fox Lair Properties in the Town of Brookhaven, over 400 acres of Pine Barrens land, which is moving along very well; but here again it's not reflected in

your numbers as well as Mud Creek.

So my overall point with this is that on one hand we can look at this and say, well, we've got \$43 million that's not in negotiation at the present time. In one sense that kind of gives the impression we have a lot of money; however, in the second sense, just to give you a sense of what's in the pipeline, which many of you that are on the Environment Committee certainly know very well.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Tom, can you give us a rough estimate, maybe based on appraised values, and the things that are in the pipeline, offers that are out there, what, you know, including whatever partnerships we might have with towns and other sources of funding, what our obligation might be in terms of what our liability is.

**MR. ISLES:**

Okay. Well, none of these could be considered obligations, the list that I just told you because they're only planning steps. They are still working their way through the appraisal stage or the early negotiation stage. Some of them are getting closer such as Fox Lairs has been the subject of very good negotiations lately. But we would expect and we would have to come back to you then for a specific authorization resolution. I know your point in terms of trying get a handle on what this might cost.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Just some rough estimate of what the County might be on the hook for.

**MR. ISLES:**

Well, I think the one factor here, too, of course, that comes into play with all the County's acquisition programs is that we have a pretty high attrition rate. We hope to narrow that in the future, but •• so what's uncertain at this point would be the •• which of these parcels actually have interested sellers, which of them can we negotiate acquisitions with and what sort of partnerships can we have. I can certainly go through with you in a general sense on some of this. We have pending in the pipeline right now 3,000 acres of farmland in open space acquisitions. We certainly don't expect to buy anywhere near those 3,000 acres. In terms of what that •• what the yield will be off of that property, I think we're probably doing well if we get a 1,000 acres, a third of that. How much does land cost? Obviously it varies from market to market. A fudge number that I sometimes use that I consider a blend of farmland

development rights and full fee and open space might be in the range of about \$75,000 an acre. So, just to give you a ballpark, that right there would be about \$75 million. Here again, don't quote me on this in terms of something scientific, but just as for general broad brush, planning purposes at this point.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

No, but I think that's important to note particularly in light of a pending resolution for an open space list that would include numerous other parcels as well, that this could be about \$75 million.

**MR. ISLES:**

That could be. And, here again, what it also isn't factoring in is what the share would be of municipalities that often times do join in with the County. What it's also not factoring in is what we might finance through an EFC, Environmental Facilities Corporation, which might •• which obviously leverages that money out a little bit further.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

A little bit further. We also may not get things at \$75 thousand an acre either.

**MR. ISLES:**

We may not. We may not. So the assumption could be varied accordingly. The only •• a couple other points I did want to make, the Budget Review Office makes the point that there is a total of about \$19 million pending in the All Drinking Water Program. And have suggested that that money should be spent since it's part of an old program before we spend new money. We don't have any quarrel with that point in principal. We agree with the general concept of spending down the old programs. As the report notes, we have a total of 13 different programs in the County right now. Two main programs that are currently going forward funding, which includes the new Drinking Water Program and the multifaceted program. So, on principle we agree with the idea of spending down and closing out the old programs. I will point out that on the \$19 million we do have approximately six properties in either contract or accepted offers including \$4 million that will be going for the National Audubon Society soon by the end of June. So, that we are trying to spend that down. There are restrictions. It's three separate programs in terms of the acquisitions and the main Drinking Water Program must be in the core. There are other requirements; for example, the 12•5•E program must be geographically spent in the five non•Pine Barrens towns and so forth. But on principle, we agree with their comment and we'll certainly seek to do that. The Director of Real Estate and I have talked

about that. And as we go forward in the next year, we would seek to spend that down as much as possible.

And, I guess the last major point I just wanted to make today is that the •• what the County Executive has requested in the Capital Program on open space this year is \$13.3 million dollars for the multifaceted program. In terms of •• that program is the most versatile program in terms of our •• both our parks acquisitions, open space acquisitions, farmland. And very importantly also to note it's also the funding for affordable housing. So, there was the decision made a year or two ago to blend the affordable housing program with the multifaceted program. So that 13 million, we think, is important to keep available for that whole variety of uses that it could be put towards including active recreation and affordable housing.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Has any of that been spent toward ••

**MR. ISLES:**

Pardon me?

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Has any of that been spent toward affordable housing?

**MR. ISLES:**

There was a separate capital item for affordable housing that was appropriated, I guess, about two years ago. There have been two projects funded with that.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Is that the same pool of money or no?

**MR. ISLES:**

This is a different pool of money. This is ••

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Different pool of money. But of that money that was to all those uses, is it being apportioned in any particular way? A certain amount toward housing, a certain amount toward active recreation, a certain amount toward watershed protection, certain amount toward habitat

protection; is there anything like that?

**MR. ISLES:**

That's a legislative decision as I understand it. I'm not aware that there's been any sort of allocation formula put into effect for that. I think it's a judgement case by case basis at this point.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Your department is making that judgement or the Legislature's making that judgement?

**MR. ISLES:**

Well, I also know you make it and the County Executive makes it. We bring acquisition resolutions, we explain them, we propose them. Some of which include multifaceted and then we present our case at that point. So, we would respectfully request •• number one, we would note the comments of the BRO. Generally we don't quarrel with them. We do agree we should spend down the older programs. In terms of how much money do we need going forward, that depends on how much we want to do, how much we want to accomplish, what the objectives are that we have. And on one hand \$43 million is a lot of money. On the other hand given rising land values, the rate of development, we think that the additional \$13.3 million in multifaceted should be approved in the Capital Program. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Thank you. Any questions for our Planning Director? Okay, thank you, Mr. Isles.

Okay. We have our Parks Commissioner, Commissioner Foley. Are you officially in that title yet?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

I believe I am.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay, good. Good. Then it's my privilege to address you as Commissioner Foley. You have the floor.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Thank you. It's my privilege to be here in that capacity. The plan that's presented before you

is a continuation of improvements in an incremental way to a broad variety of parks, historic buildings and facilities. And you'll see it extends over a number of years in the future. It's reflective of the fiscal times we're in. We think it addresses the most important safety and maintenance issues first. And we go on from there. It's crucial, I think, to pay attention to these buildings particularly the historic buildings. If we don't, if we don't make the choices on what to do, they'll be made for us as they were yesterday afternoon at the Chandler Estate. The historic properties are very expensive and difficult to maintain. People have criticized us for having millions of dollars on the books for historic properties and not moving. But that's kind of a trap. It's tough to develop the proper attention to these properties without the money. In fact, without the budgeted lines for maintaining these buildings, we can't even start the planning of it. The planning of a historic property takes years to get done. We would like it all to move faster but it just doesn't. So, we would stress the importance of these projects both in terms of public safety and of preserving the valuable assets of Suffolk County. And I'll be happy to answer any questions.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. We'll start with Legislator O'Leary. I have some myself.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Good morning, Commissioner.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Good morning.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Have you prioritized any of the programs for your department with respect to the Capital Programs and the 2005 Capital Budget? Have you any ••

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Prioritized them in what way? We've been through this many times.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

In your preferences of how you'd like to see them completed? Your particular preferences; your personal preferences?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

It's tough to look at it that way. All of these things are important. We want them all to move.

We're •• it's kind of a shotgun approach to all of this. We're working on several different things all at the same time. I haven't thought of it in that way. I haven't picked one thing, said this is more important than the others. The things that will be, I think, of fiscal interest to the County of those who preserve revenue; improvements to the golf courses, improvements to the campgrounds. There are also public safety issues at the campgrounds in particular. And, again, not to pick one thing over another, we don't do something with our historic buildings, they just continue to deteriorate. I don't know exactly where your question is targeted.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

If given the option of selecting particular programs from your department which you'd like to see prioritized as completed prior to others, which one would you select? Or which ones would you select?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Tough question to answer. I think we've made that selection in presenting this plan. These are the most important things. We know we've got a constraining budget. We picked only the top stuff to put on the list.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

So, in other words, everything that is there is a top priority with the Parks Department?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Yes.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Is that safe to say?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

I think it is safe to say. I wish I could say something else, but I don't know where to go with that.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Thank you.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

I have a question.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. Legislator Lindsay.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

Commissioner, you alluded before the Chandler Estate burning down last night. We did have insurance on the building?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Well, we're in the County's general insurance program. The first millions is ours, I believe. And I don't think we'll •• well, if you were going to restore that property, you'd be talking about more than a million. The conversations we've had preliminarily don't talk about restoration. But demolishing what's left and removing it from there. So that would not be more than a million.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Legislator Alden.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Hi, Commissioner.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Good morning.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

A couple of things. Before I got here, I think that it was a policy of not putting money back into the golf courses. And over the past six, seven years, we've put a lot of money back into the golf courses. And I think as you mentioned before, that protects a revenue stream because that seems to be as far as if you look at all the parks, what brings in the most amount of money? Your golf and certainly out at Smith's Point, the beach, the parking out there. So, that's important to protect those revenue streams.

Are there any other projects that would actually create a revenue stream or enhance a revenue stream that we should be looking at? Because I know that we talked about creating more campsites with electricity and sewer hook•ups and things like; water hook•ups rather. Because those, it seems like even at Smith's Point now, it looks like we're booked for the whole season basically. And any other parks where we have those type of facilities, we're booked for the full season. Is there any other type of project like that that we should possibly at including.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Some of these buildings we have that are unoccupied or under-utilized could be looked at as environmental education centers and maybe programs around those might produce some revenue. I don't think it's going to be huge, but it will be some. The irony of campgrounds is the way that it's changing, the campers are becoming bigger. These units are becoming •• they occupy more space. People want to bring more cars. When we go in and redo a campground, sometimes we're reducing the number of sites so we can accommodate today's taste. You can't expand the number of sites without eating up more land. So, that's a tough one to do. But I think maintaining the quality of what we have, making the campgrounds more attractive with water and electric where we don't have them will have a net increase revenue effect. So, it's not expanding so much as it is taking care of what we have and improving it.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

But you were also very successful when you're in an estate with partnering with private industry and actually achieving a lot of good capital type of programs. Have you got a plan in place that would possibly move forward with that on a County level?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

I have ideas. I haven't got a plan yet.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Okay.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

We need to come up with a vehicle for capturing that money; where we don't have to pay a huge overhead and using it in the intended fashion. You got to develop of level of trust with these potential sponsors or corporate donors that you're going to do what they expect with their money. They don't always trust the government's going to do that so we have to find a way to accept it and manage it properly and prove to them we're doing what they expect.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Commissioner Foley, first question is, do you have an idea, and I believe you do from earlier conversation, how many buildings the County owns •• park buildings that might be considered historic in nature?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

I think there's something like 130 buildings.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

And the maintenance of those buildings; is that DPW who maintains these buildings or is it a function of the Parks Department?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

DPW takes care of any capital investments we would make in them. But beneath that level of capital, the maintenance is the Parks Department's responsibility.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

So, the regular maintenance in terms of painting these buildings every few years, re•roofing these buildings every few years, that's something that your department is responsible for?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Generally. It depends on the scale of the repair.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

And I realize you're just coming into this position. Have we had any comprehensive analysis of those buildings in terms of setting some priority list and what •• setting a routine maintenance schedule for these buildings to make sure that they don't fall through the cracks in terms of those general repairs?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

It's been done on a •• kind of an incremental basis; building by building depending on when they were acquired, and how important they seem. I don't think there's been an overall review of all the historic properties.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

So we don't have a maintenance schedule that's developed for these buildings?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

You mean a daily routine maintenance?

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

No, not daily but to say, okay, this building needs to get re•roofed every ten years.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

No, we don't have that.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

That kind of thing? So ••

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

There are some general ••

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

•• you look at the time line and say, okay, it's time to re•roof that building. Okay. Let me go specifically to a County facility that I've talked to you on multiple occasions about, which is the Third House facility in Montauk, which clearly is historic having been used in the Spanish American War when Theodore Roosevelt returned. It's also the •• right now it's actually the second oldest house remaining in Montauk. And that building, as you know, because you've been there through it with me, is in a state of disrepair with considerable amount of leaking in the roof which is now starting to cause water damage within the interior of the structure. This is a property that could be revenue producer in terms of an environmental center as you talked about with actually overnight lodging. You have the 12 cabins or however many cabins plus other areas that could be used for lodging. In the Capital Budget, there is only •• there was a half a million dollars that was not directly assigned but indirectly assigned through the line for historic preservation. And that money has been shifted, stretched out over other years. Do you have a sense of how much we would need to put in place to do immediate repairs to that building and get it operational again so that it could be used for public purposes?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

It'll be •• it depends on what you mean by immediate repairs. Just stabilization of it so the deterioration is stopped, it would be a guess. It's going to be probably a million dollars. We're trying to •• and you'll see a resolution before you to appropriate some money to finish up the planning and engineering for the entire •• well, the exterior restoration of the building, we don't have the estimate on that yet. But that's really what needs to happen to stop the deterioration.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

And the longer it waits, probably the more expensive the project becomes?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Naturally, yes.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Because of the extent of interior damage.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Right. It's gotten to the point we can't maintain it now. It needs capital attention.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Right. Okay. Other questions? Are there other buildings of historic nature that are in similar state of disrepair?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

There are, yeah. There are some that are worse.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Do we have a priority list?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

They are not on a list right now. It's a question there of historic significance. We've tried to pick off the most important kind of publically visible buildings first. There's the Horan House at Timber Point. I don't know if we'll ever do anything with it. But it is on •• it has a historic designation. It is destroying itself, so to speak.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

It seems to me that when the County buys these properties, we take on an obligation to protect these historic structures. We cannot allow them to deteriorate. And, of course, it costs money.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

It does. It costs a lot of money.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

On that note, it's also incumbent upon us that when we go out and buy •• and I'm glad you touched on it •• we buy open space to preserve. Sometimes there's houses on these; sometimes there's historic buildings. It's also significant to note that the amount of park police we had ten and fifteen or twenty years ago is significantly more than what we have today. So things like •• if we find out that it was arson that destroyed one of our buildings yesterday, we can blame that on ourselves for not providing in the budget enough people to actually go and protect the things that we go and buy. So, one can make an argument that we should actually, you know, not speed up our acquisition program but slow it down to the point where we can do it correctly and not put things at risk. And I'm not making that •• I'm not putting forth that proposition right now. But some people can make that direct argument; that we have speeded up our program. We buy all these things and we can't properly manage them or protect not only ourselves but our workers and the buildings that we go and buy. Or the public that ends up on these properties.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Commissioner Foley, maybe you want to address that in term of staffing. I'm not sure that's a Capital Budget concern. It's probably more of a general budget concern. But I'd like you to address the issue you brought up earlier about putting together some kind of analysis of what we have maybe through a structural engineer; going through all those buildings that are on the historic list and determining which ones are in need of immediate repair. And maybe there should be a capital budget line that would •• and maybe it's already in that historic restoration, where we could use that money to bring in •• I'm not asking you or your staff to do this, but to bring in a consultant to look at those buildings and find out •• make sure they're safe, make sure that the public should be within these buildings; that they're safe for the public. And which ones need to be taken care of now so that they don't become even more costly later or •• and we might even lose some of these buildings if we don't take action right away.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Such a study would have to be a Capital Budget item of some kind. Some are done and we could factor those in, set priorities for them. But many are not and we'd to have capital funds to complete it.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I think it would be helpful to guide this Legislature through a study like that. I'm surprised we don't one, but I think we should. Other questions? Thank you, Commissioner.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Thank you.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Doing more with less has its limitations, too.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. I don't see any other Commissioners. So, why don't we move onto Budget Review. We have Jim Spero who, I guess, will lead us in a presentation and answer our questions. Mr. Spero?

**MR. SPERO:**

I'll just go over our recommendations concerning Parks Department projects. The purchase of mobile data terminals for the parks police project 7136, we recommended moving the funding for that project back one year from 2006 to 2007. That's \$150,000. Project 7162 restoration of Smith Point Park, we recommended transferring \$1 million that's included for the repair of the park to site improvements for maintenance dredging because we believe that an ongoing maintenance dredging program is really •• is going to be required to keep Smith Point Park intact as time goes forward.

The next project deals with a historic structure, the Sagtikos Manor. We recommended putting in \$100 thousand so that a detail listing of all the collections in the house can be created so that we know what's in the house and hopefully prevent items from, let's say, disappearing so to speak.

Improvements to golf courses, this is the biggest generating item in the •• revenue generating item in the county parks. We recommended adding \$300,000 in 2005; \$312,000 in 2006; \$150,000 in 2007; reducing subsequent years \$325,000 for a net increase in the program of \$437,000 for various improvements in the County golf courses. The agriculture leasing program, this is project 7180, we recommended adding \$600,000 in subsequent years to

complete the mapping survey of the Peconic Estuary. And those are the recommendations we made on •• for the parks various capital projects.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Any questions for Mr. Spero? Legislator O'Leary.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Jim, were any of those funds taken out of the proposed amended capital budgeted program?

**MR. SPERO:**

The level of proposed funding is, number of projects have been reduced from what the department had requested if you look in our report for each of the various projects that's ••

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

But the numbers you cited are numbers that have been reduced ••

**MR. SPERO:**

Well, those are the numbers we recommend adding back.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Because they've been taken away?

**MR. SPERO:**

Right. For example, in the historic restoration and preservation project, the department requested \$3.65 million; and the proposed program includes \$1.2 million. The funding that's •• \$500,000 was included in that project for 2004 for the Montauk property. And if IR 1418 is approved, that funding would be removed from the 2004 capital budget. So, the County has a wide variety of needs. And over the years we have not met those needs to maintain our historic properties to the level that even •• to use them, it would be one thing. Just to keep them intact and from falling apart. One house that comes to mind is the Horan House down in West Sayville where the house was never re•roofed. Water intrusion just completely destroyed the house. This kind of thing is what goes on.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Jim, is there a way to encumber •• let's say •• there's half a million dollars right now available

for Third House.

**MR. SPERO:**

And scheduled for '04, yeah.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

In '04. And that building is in need of immediate repairs. Is there a way to encumber that money; protect it?

**MR. SPERO:**

What you can do is appropriate it for that specific historic property. And ••

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

And that would require a resolution?

**MR. SPERO:**

That would require a resolution. And then the funding would be in place at least to make the repairs. It would be up to the department working in conjunction with the Department of Public Works to actually carry the project forward.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Once it's appropriated by the Legislature, it's protected.

**MR. SPERO:**

Yes, the appropriation will continue year after year until the Legislature puts in a subsequent resolution to discontinue the appropriation.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Other questions?

**MR. SPERO:**

Just a general note, in the introduction to our report, we do a detailed analysis of where we believe debt service costs are going for the next seven •• through the year 2014. And land acquisition is part of that analysis. So, to the extent the County continues an aggressive land acquisition program, it's going to add to our total debt burden going forward. So, the

Legislature should carefully look at that and realizing that the money we spend in the Capital Budget translates into additional operating costs for the operating budget in the future.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Jim, maybe you did this, but in terms of •• I know when the County Executive handed us his proposed Capital Budget, he attempted to stabilize the debt service. So, to create 40 plus million dollars for the Yaphank correctional facility, he eliminated \$46 million in other capital programs. There's no statutory requirement to do that; is that correct?

**MR. SPERO:**

No, there is not. That's a policy decision to keep the total cost debt service authorizations constant by •• at the expense of other capital projects. The primary policy decision for the Legislature this year in our opinion is not whether or not we need to build a jail because that's • we're going to have to move ahead with phase one construction of a new Yaphank jail. Other projects will be undertaken in conjunction with that jail construction. That's why the •• our analysis on future debt service cost is really critically important for the Legislators to understand how the various debt components lay one on top of the other as time goes on. But other capital needs also have to be addressed. So, this is what makes this year's Capital program particularly more difficult than it had been in the past.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

But at the same time interest rates are at historic lows. So money is cheaper than it has been in the past making it ••

**MR. SPERO:**

Yeah, they're still relatively low. Unfortunately since the Legislature approved the refunding plan, they've moved in the wrong direction. And preliminary figures we've obtained show that • the amount of savings we could have generated from the refunding are about \$10 million less than they would have been at the end of March.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I also noticed that some of the projects that we're funding have significant state or federal matches or contributions which may not be available in future years that we could •• we could potentially lose that money when we are in a position where we must go forth with the project.

**MR. SPERO:**

Typically, yeah, if you don't use federal funding within a certain time frame, you are in jeopardy of losing that funding stream.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

So I think all of this has to go into our analysis of which money to spend first.

**MR. SPERO:**

Yes, that's true. And those are the priority decisions the Legislature will have to make.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

It might be much costly later because of loss of those grants or because of the higher interest rates that we have to pay. Legislator Alden.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

I mean, these are all underlying. That's fine. But the overall picture is how much of county government and how much of the things we provide as far as services and recreation facilities and things like that to the people of Suffolk County, how much of that do we want to forego or push aside to pay for huge increase in Medicaid and our retirement system. I mean, that's at the bottom of the whole argument here. And that's something that's paid in cash every year. So, now the Capital Program is directly affected by how much of our money is taken out by those two programs. So, really what we're doing now is •• we have to figure out because it's a policy decision that we make. What do we want county government to look like? You know, do we want to give up our whole parks and recreation system to pay for our Medicaid and the increases in retirement. So, those are the decisions really that we're looking at right now and should be talking about when we go through the capital program.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

And also the point you made earlier about looking at projects that actually are revenue producing, that some of these here •• some of these will actually cover the bulk, if not all of the debt service that they incur, to the production of revenues. I think they almost go into a different category because they're self•sustaining. Other questions?

**MR. SPERO:**

We contacted the Vanderbilt Museum a little •• a short while ago. They didn't know about the meeting and Lance Mallamo, I understand, is on his way here.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Are we going to sit around and wait for him?

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

No. Is that the end of your presentation? Is there more?

**MR. SPERO:**

For the Parks component, yes.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. What about the Environment component?

**MR. SPERO:**

Well, the environment, we did a •• we did a •• Tom Isles had referred to earlier, an overview of the land acquisition programs and the amounts of money that are still available in those programs. That's on pages 14, 15 and 16 of the report. And it was •• the prime •• our prime recommendation was that we use up these available funds prior to authorizing new spending for land acquisition programs. Mr. Isles pointed out that there are a number of acquisitions currently in the pipeline which may exhaust this available funding. But we would recommend to make the Department of Planning and Real Estate use that available funding up prior to seeking new authorizations for spending.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Going back to Parks for a second, the money that is available for that building that I talked about in Montauk, it's not actually shown in the Capital Budget, but it's buried within the historic preservation and restoration ••

**MR. SPERO:**

That's an umbrella project that's used to fund a number of facilities.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Would it be helpful •• or would it not be helpful to have it have its own line like so many of the other projects do, like Sagtikos Manor?

**MR. SPERO:**

Well, what I would recommend doing is if you want to appropriate the funds for a specific property, we'll set up an appropriation with a unique point number, project number. And the title of that sub•project will be restoration of the Roosevelt House in Montauk or something ••

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Well, I would like to appropriate the half a million that's there if the Legislature will support that. But I know that won't be enough money. We heard the Commissioner say a million dollars. I think that will be short, too. So, I'd like to put enough money in place to fix it. So, appropriating the money now and then putting into next year's Capital Budget a million dollars for that project, I think ••

**MR. SPERO:**

Well, what you could do is appropriate half a million this year, put in another half million next year, to the '05 budget; something like that.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Right. Maybe that would be enough. Legislator Bishop.

**MR. SPERO:**

Sean is telling me there's an appropriation balance of \$850,000 just for restoration of that property.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I didn't follow that. In the current budget?

**MR. SPERO:**

No. This is from a prior authorization made by the Legislature.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

So, there's 850,000 available right now?

**MR. SPERO:**

Right now to spend.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. Let's appropriate it.

**MR. SPERO:**

It's already appropriated. It just •• the department just has to develop a plan with •• an action plan with Public Works to actually spend the money.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Legislator Bishop, did you have a question?

**LEG. BISHOP:**

Does either the Executive's proposal or your review take into account the suspension of the 5 •25•5 policy?

**MR. SPERO:**

We speak to it. It was our recommendation that •• we have a general recommendation that the 5•25•5 type projects that are included in 2005 be shown that way in the Capital Budget. The County Executive showed them with serial bonds. We recommended transferring the funding designation back to Pay•As•You•Go. And that would do two things. The Legislature still retains the option of funding the program next year if it chooses to do so even though it's been suspended. Secondly, any funding that would be appropriated next year for a Pay•As•You •Go project would require an amendment to the Capital Budget, which would require 14 votes. So, any Pay•As•You•Go project that would be funded would require a super majority vote of the Legislature to move forward.

**LEG. BISHOP:**

So, the Executive's budget for next year indicates that the County will borrow \$20 million for items that in prior years we would have paid as you go out of, which is actually in line with what the legislative policy is.

**MR. SPERO:**

That's right. The program was suspended. But it's not •• you're not precluded from still funding the program.

**LEG. BISHOP:**

No, but it's honest budgeting. It's reflected •• it reflects the realty as it currently exists. Okay. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Commission Foley, I think, wants to come up and address the Third House situation, I believe. Going back one second •• 850,000 is appropriated and we can appropriate another half a million right now, which would bring it to 1.3 million?

**MR. SPERO:**

That's correct.

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Just let me clarify what that is. That million •• 1.3 million is intended to take care of the exterior restoration; the roof, the siding, all the things you saw that are causing the interior degradation. What's not addressed there is all the interior improvements that will be needed to make the place useable. We need heating, ventilating air conditioning money. We need to restore the interior walls and petitions in the rooms. None of this funding is intended to go that far. So, stabilizing the building, which will be in a range of a million to 1.3 still will not make it useable.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. So, two questions. One, is that stabilization process moving forward? Is there an engineer developing the bid specs for that so we can get a contractor in there to start work on it?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

Yes, there was an engineer •• both a historic architect and an engineer had done some work prior to my getting here. There was some dispute about that. And as I mentioned earlier, there will be a resolution coming before the Legislature to appropriate \$60,000 to finish up that work. That give us the plans and specs to go out to bid for the stabilization of the building.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. And, so on top of that 1.3 million, another half a million takes care of the interior?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

I don't know. It would be a guess. That's a safe guess. But don't kill me if it's not enough.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

So, it's a half million that's currently in the 2004 budget. If that get's appropriated, that'll give you a million three. And then if the 2005 Capital Budget has another half a million dollars for the interior renovations, that might cover it?

**COMMISSIONER FOLEY:**

I hope so.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Are you happy?

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Yes, I'm happy now. Other questions?

**LEG. BISHOP:**

It'll still be third.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

It'll still be Third House. That's okay. It was the third house built in the area. It's actually the site of America's first cattle ranch out there. Hard to believe. You wouldn't think the first cattle ranch was out in Montauk. But it was. It was all grazing •• grazing lands out there. Beautiful site. Okay.

**LEG. BISHOP:**

What do you mean, America's first cattle ranch? You're telling me that there was no other cattle in America until Montauk? That just doesn't make sense.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Check your history books. Yes, first cattle ranch.

**LEG. BISHOP:**

I don't buy it.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

This was one of the •• you got to remember, this was one of the first areas settled. East Hampton was 1630 something. 1642 the Town of East Hampton was settled. They brought those cattle in. All right. Not too many cattle out there anymore. Okay. Any other questions? Why don't we adjourn then. Thank you.

**LEG. BISHOP:**

I thought we were waiting for the Vanderbilt?

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

All right. Let's recess. What time is the next committee meeting? Eleven? Why don't we recess for 20 minutes.

**(THE CAPITAL BUDGET MEETING RECESSED FROM 10:36 AM TO 10:58 AM)**

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Legislators, please report to the horseshoe. Okay. We're going to continue with this Special Meeting on the budget of the Parks and Environment Committees. And I believe our representatives from Vanderbilt Museum are here. I'd like to ask them to come up to the table so that we can hear your comments and can answer any of our questions. For the record, if you'll identify yourself.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Lance Mallamo, Executive Director of Suffolk County Museum. First of all, I'd like to apologize for being late. I did not receive a notice of this meeting. I have a schedule that shows this occurring on June 2nd. And I did call last week to confirm. And that's what I was told. So, apparently I'm not on the e•mail list. And I'd like to thank you for giving me a heads up this morning to race over here. I'll do my best. I really haven't even read all the budget reviews. I just got that yesterday and started reading it. But I'll do my best to answer any questions that you have today.

We do have a number of items of concern with the proposed Capital Budget. We're very happy to see the recommendations for the habitat area, which is very important to the museum. We believe that having that project move forward will assist us in increasing our revenues at the museum. So, we support the recommendation there. In the water front development project 7410, we are concerned that that project has been moving back •• further back each year. We have designed the restoration of the seaplane hangar project. We are designing that to take place concurrently at some point with the water front so that the two can open simultaneously. The seaplane hangar has been funded. The design is about 60% complete right now. That is a logistically difficult area to get to. And we're counting on the water front boardwalk project to enable our museum visitors to enter the seaplane through that project. We also see that project as crucial to, again, helping us increase revenues. That's a whole new area of the museum that's never been opened that we can develop outdoor marine science and natural history programs.

Our educational programs are at full capacity at the museum right now. We have no other space to work with so all of the new areas that we can develop are occurring on exterior areas. And I'm happy to say I •• just this morning my staff reported that we've had a one third increase from last year in programs that occur in exterior spaces. This is primarily in the spring, summer and fall. So, this is an area that we have an opportunity to develop new programs. This is also a project that has a commitment from a donor to provide \$1 million in funding towards the seaplane hangar exhibit as they take place. That donor is 87 years of age. The water front is named in their honor, William and Molly Rogers. And they're very anxious to see it move forward. And this will greatly distress them to see this continually move back. I've looked at the budget over the past three years. And it has moved back at least a year or two each year since then. So, we would strongly request that that funding be move forward particularly since the planning funds were adopted last year. And that is underway.

The other issue that we're primarily concerned about is the Goto projector. People have made statements to me well, the museum traded the funding for the Goto for Normandy Manor. And had I been here next week, I'm sure I could go back through the minutes of the •• of your committee meetings when that was acquired. And I don't ever remember saying that. In fact, I remember saying yeah, we're going to be back for that because that's crucial, the Goto projector. But we can put it off into the future. The Goto projector, which is our primary source of income at the Vanderbilt is now 34 years old. These projectors have a life of about

ten to twelve years. So, it's well overdue. We've given it a major overhaul each of the past three years. It cost us over ten to fifteen thousand dollars each year. And it really is not running all that well. It's acceptable, but if that were to completely fail, we would have to go to another plan, which we have another plan in place but it wouldn't rely on astronomy. And our astronomy programs are very, very important and the core of our museum programs; so that we would like to see that project continue.

I think we had requested the full amount of the funding. We understand there are budget issues that are a lot bigger this year with the rebuilding of the jail. So, we had suggested that maybe that could be broken up into different components. Our plan there is to not spend all the money on the projector, which we could. Star projectors range anywhere from one to six million dollars. We have •• staff and I have opted to choose a lesser grade star projector and supplement the program with what's called a video emersion system. If any of you have attended the Hayden Planetarium in New York, the new Rose Center, they spent \$6 million on their projector there. When you go to the show, the projector comes up out of the floor, gives you a brilliant star show for about 90 seconds. And then unbeknownst to you, the projector goes back in the floor and the rest of it is all video. It really tricks your eye. And we felt well, if they could do that there, we don't need the major projector at the Vanderbilt which, I think, ten years ago when we anticipated this project, that's all we were looking at. We feel we can do a lot more with video emersion and special effects. They would be two different •• they do supplement each other, but they would be two different contracts. So. This could be broken up into a project of probably in million dollars increments.

Those are the main issues we have. Some of the more minor ones, we'd like to see the wiring project move ahead. We're 85% complete on that project. We'd like to make it a 100% complete. And our plumbing as well. We've •• we're going to be short in plumbing funding. And they have completed the planning on the plumbing. They're going to be there next week for the final review of the plans. And that extra money is going to be needed in those years. And I think those are the issues that I'd like to address today. If you have any questions, I'll do my best to answer them.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Questions for Mr. Mallamo? All right. You got off easy.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Thank you so much. I really do appreciate your giving me the opportunity to get here this morning. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

We appreciate it. Okay. Meeting's adjourned.

**(THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 11:05 AM)**